



~~SECRET~~
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL AFFAIRS

SEP 24 1970

TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM: SCI - Herman Pollack

SUBJECT: Space Cooperation with the Soviets - Compatible
Docking for Spacecraft INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

A noteworthy development has just occurred in U.S.-Soviet space cooperation with the favorable response from the Soviets to a U.S. proposal that we discuss compatible docking arrangements in space. This was first proposed informally to the Soviets last Spring by Dr. Philip Handler, President of our National Academy of Sciences, and the proposal was confirmed on July 31 in a letter to the Soviets from Dr. T. O. Paine, Administrator of NASA (Tab A). Dr. Paine suggested that a first step might involve a visit to NASA's Houston laboratories by two Soviet engineers for technical discussions of the problems which would need solution.

The President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Professor Keldysh, has now responded to Dr. Paine endorsing the compatible docking concept with some enthusiasm and inviting three or four American specialists to visit Moscow at an early date to initiate detailed discussions. A translation of the Keldysh letter is given at Tab B; a substantially identical letter has also been received by Dr. Handler.

The willingness of the Soviets to enter into these discussions stands in sharp contrast to their previous reluctance to engage in significant cooperative activities in space. Our efforts to interest them in such cooperation date back to the first planning of space projects in 1955 and included an exchange of letters

DECLASSIFIED

Authority ANN 969052

By

~~SECRET~~

OUR/SES -
In Bergen -

1) PGS
2) RO
3) Fde

52 1-1 US-USSR

~~SECRET~~

-2-

between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev in 1962. The meager net result of this fifteen years of effort has been four modest projects agreed to by NASA and the Soviet Academy of Sciences, none of which have yet been fully implemented. The attached letter from Dr. Keldysh may thus mark the start of a more productive phase in U.S. - Soviet space relationships.

Compatible docking systems on spaceships and space stations would enhance the safety of space flight by making possible rescue operations, and may also facilitate other forms of space cooperation along the lines laid down by the President in NSDM-70 of July 10, 1970 (Tab C).

We are recommending to NASA that an early and favorable reply be sent to Professor Keldysh.

Clearance: EUR/SOV - Mr. Dubs (draft)
EUR/SES - Mr. Burgess (draft)

Attachments:

Tab A - Dr. Paine's letter to Academician Keldysh,
July 31, 1970

Tab B - Keldysh reply to Paine letter, September 11,
1970

Tab C - National Security Decision Memorandum 70,
July 10, 1970

Copies to:

J
EUR
EUR/SOV
EUR/SES ✓
PM/AE

SCI/SAM:RTWebber:mb1
9/24/70 x23622

~~SECRET~~